Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
Canada

News Release

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CRTC RENEWS CHAN-TV AND CHEK-TV LICENCES FOR ONE YEAR; WESTCOM TO FILE NEW RENEWAL APPLICATIONS THAT RESPOND TO CRTC CONCERNS REGARDING CANADIAN PROGRAMMING EXPENDITURES

OTTAWA/HULL -- The CRTC today renewed Westcom TV Group Ltd.'s licences for CHAN-TV Vancouver, CHEK-TV Victoria and their respective transmitters in British Columbia for one year, extending from September 1, 1995 to August 31, 1996 (Decision CRTC 95-99). This decision follows a November 1994 public hearing in Vancouver at which the Commission examined licence renewal applications for these and other private English-language television stations serving the area.

"This one-year licence term reflects the Commission's serious concerns regarding, most particularly, the practices followed by Westcom in the accounting of its Canadian programming expenditures," said CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer. In the Commission's view, the licensee has significantly overstated the funds actually spent on Canadian programming by CHAN-TV and CHEK-TV. Moreover, these practices have had the effect of artificially deflating the stations' profitability upon which the CRTC relies in order to determine the adequacy of the licensee's commitments.

"The CRTC believes that Westcom's unique circumstances as owner of two television stations serving virtually all viewers in Canada's third-largest market reinforce its obligations to contribute meaningfully to the Canadian broadcasting system," Mr. Spicer concluded.

The CRTC expects the licensee to file, by September 1, 1995 at the latest, new renewal applications for each of CHAN-TV and CHEK-TV. The applications must be based on a true accounting of the stations' profitability, so that the Commission may establish what would be an appropriate contribution by Westcom to the broadcasting system.

For 1995-1996 the CRTC expects Westcom, as a minimum, to ensure that its expenditures on Canadian programming are sufficient to maintain the overall quality of service provided by the two stations. The Commission also notes the following commitments made by Westcom:

- broadcast of an average of 20 hours 15 minutes per week of original, local news programming on CHAN-TV, and 13 hours 20 minutes per week of such programming on CHEK-TV;
- contributions to script and concept development of $180,000 for CHAN-TV and $70,000 for CHEK-TV;
- broadcast of an average of 3.5 hours per week of Canadian children's programming on CHAN-TV and one hour per week on CHEK-TV during their local broadcast hours. This programming will be augmented by one hour per week of Canadian children's programs provided by the CTV network.

CHAN-TV and CHEK-TV, like other private television stations, must adhere to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' self-regulatory codes on television violence, gender portrayal, and advertising to children. They are also expected to further increase the amount of captioned programming they broadcast.

Finally, the CRTC encourages both stations to continue their employment equity initiatives, particularly with respect to the hiring of qualified aboriginal candidates.

The Westcom Group is owned entirely by WIC Western International Communications Ltd. Through its Vancouver and Victoria television stations and transmitters across British Columbia, Westcom extends CTV network service to approximately 95% of all households in the province.

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Copies of today's decision are available through the public examination room at any of the following CRTC offices:

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